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ABSTRACT

The types of teacher evaluation instruments used in Tennessee's public school systems during 1982-83 were reviewed to determine how they related to other district characteristics. Districts were categorized according to whether they (1) negotiated teacher contracts, (2) spent above the state median per pupil, (3) paid teachers above the state median salary, (4) elected or appointed their superintendents, (5) were county or city/special districts, and (6) reported average daily attendance above the state median. Instruments were categorized as using rating scales, checklists, performance objectives, anecdotal records, a combination of scales and objectives, or other methods. Evaluation criteria were grouped into four content types: personal qualities, professional qualities, instructional skills, and classroom management and discipline skills. The study found that 57.4 percent of the districts used rating scales and 34.9 percent combined rating scales with performance objectives. The tendency to use rating scales alone was lower among districts paying higher salaries, appointing superintendents, and operating as city/special districts. The most frequently cited evaluation criteria related to professional cooperation, effective planning, and student control. Systems paying higher salaries considered more instructional skills items, as did city/special systems. The mean number of items evaluated was 30. (PGD)

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PRE-CAREER LADDER TEACHER EVALUATION IN TENNESSEE: ANALYSIS OF TYPE AND CONTENT OF LOCALLY DEVELOPED TEACHER EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

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Introduction

Prior to implementation of the Career Ladder program in 1984-85, Tennessee's public school systems, like those in many other states, evaluated teachers using locally developed instruments and procedures. Although State Board of Education regulations adopted in 1973 required that teacher performance be evaluated on a regularly scheduled basis, there were no state mandated guidelines and procedures for teacher evaluation, nor were there statewide standards defining desirable teaching competencies or behaviors.

Design of the Study

This study was conducted to analyze locally developed teacher evaluation instruments in use in Tennessee public school systems in 1982-83 relative to (1) type of instrument and (2) content in relation to six school system characteristics. Differences in type of teacher evaluation instrument utilized and content of the evaluation criteria included in the instruments were sought between school systems in relation to the following school system characteristics: (1) participation in teacher contract negotiations, (2) per pupil expenditure, (3) average annual teacher salary, (4) method of selection of superintendent, (5) type of school system, and (6) size of school system.

The types of instruments utilized across the state were categorized as (1) rating scales, (2) checklists, (3) performance objectives, (4) anecdotal records, (5) combination of rating scales and performance objectives, and (6) other.

Teacher evaluation criteria were categorized into four content areas commonly referred to in the literature: (1) personal qualities, (2) professional qualities, (3) instructional skills, and (4) classroom management and discipline skills. Although for the purposes of the study the evaluation items on each instrument were coded, the primary focus of the content analysis, findings, and conclusions of this study was directed at the four content categories. It was determined that these categories provided a convenient and workable framework for the discussion of the problem.

In 1982-83, there were 147 public school systems in Tennessee, 129 of which submitted copies of their teacher evaluation instruments for inclusion in the study. All 129 of the instruments were analyzed and coded for type, and 124 of the instruments were analyzed and coded for content. (Five of the instruments were in the form of performance objectives or anecdotal records and had no references to teacher characteristics, qualities, skills, or behavior. They were not, therefore, coded for content.) The chi square test was used to determine differences between school systems in their choice of type of instrument. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to determine differences among school systems in the content of their teacher evaluation instruments.

For the purposes of this study, each school system was coded in relation to the six selected school system characteristics, operationally defined according to the following dichotomies.

1. Participation in teacher contract negotiations. Negotiating since 1979-80 or non-negotiating since 1979-80.

2. Per pupil expenditure.- Below the state median per pupil expenditure or above the state median per pupil expenditure.

3. Average annual teacher salary.- Below the state median average annual teacher salary or above the state median average annual teacher salary.

4. Method of selection of superintendent.- Elected or appointed.

5. Type of school system.- County or city/special school district.

6. Size of school system.- Average daily attendance (ADA) below the state median or ADA above the state median.

Findings

Type of Instrument

Table 1 presents the number and percentage of the types of teacher evaluation instruments used by the 129 school systems. Rating scales were used in some form by the overwhelming majority (92.3%) of public school systems in Tennessee. Over 57% of the school systems (57.4%) used rating scales and an additional 34.9% used rating scales combined with performance objectives.

Table 1

Number and Percentage of Type of Teacher Evaluation Instrument

Type of Instrument	Number	Percentage
Rating scale	74	57.4
Checklist	0	0
Performance objectives	4	3.1
Anecdotal records	1	.8
Combination rating scale/performance objectives	45	34.9
Other	5	3.9
	129	100.0

In order to perform the chi square test on the six hypotheses referring to school system characteristics and choice of type of instrument, the number of teacher evaluation instruments analyzed was reduced to 119 for statistical reasons relating to the chi square test. Two types of instruments, rating scales and the combination of rating scales and performance objectives, together accounted for over 92% of the instruments, and the chi square test was applied only to these. The remaining 10 cases, consisting of performance objectives, anecdotal records, and other, were removed from the sample.

Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 present the results of the chi square test for type of instrument by the six selected school system characteristics. There was no significant difference in choice of type of teacher evaluation instrument between school sytems based upon participation in teacher contract negotiations, per pupil expenditure, method of selection of superintendent, or size of school system.

Table 4 reveals a significant difference in choice of type of instrument between school systems based upon average annual teacher salary. School systems below the median average annual teacher salary tended to use rating scales. In addition, as indicated in Table 6, a significant difference was found in choice of type of instrument between school systems based upon type of school system. County school systems tended to use rating scales.

Table 2

Chi Square for Type of Instrument by Negotiating and Non-Negotiating School Systems

Type of Instrument	Negotiating F	Negotiating Pct	Non-Negotiating F	Non-Negotiating Pct
Rating scale	34	64.2	40	60.6
Combined rating scale/ performance objectives	19	35.8	26	39.4
	53	100.0	66	100.0

Chi Square = .04 with 1 degree of freedom.

Significance level = .84.

Table 3

Chi Square for Type of Instrument by School Systems Below and Above Median Per Pupil Expenditure

Type of Instrument	Below Median Expenditure F	Below Median Expenditure Pct	Above Median Expenditure F	Above Median Expenditure Pct
Rating scale	36	61.0	38	63.3
Combined rating scale/performance objectives	23	39.0	22	36.7
	59	100.0	60	100.0

Chi square = .005 with 1 degree of freedom.

Significance level = .94.

Table 4

Chi Square for Type of Instrument by School Systems

Below and Above Median Teacher Salary

Type of Instrument	Below Median Salary		Above Median Salary	
	F	Pct	F	Pct
Rating scale	43	71.7	31	52.5
Combined rating scale/performance objectives	17	28.3	28	47.5
	60	100.0	59	100.0

Chi square = 3.85 with 1 degree of freedom.

Significance level = .05.

Table 5

Chi Square for Type of Instrument by Elected and Appointed Superintendent

Type of Instrument	Elected		Appointed	
	F	Pct	F	Pct
Rating scale	44	67.7	30	55.6
Combined rating scale/performance objectives	21	32.3	24	44.4
	65	100.0	54	100.0

Chi square = 1.37 with degree of freedom.

Significance level = .24.

Table 6

Chi Square for Type of Instrument by County and City/Special School Systems

Type of Instrument	County		City/Special	
	F	Pct	F	Pct
Rating scale	56	71.8	18	43.9
Combined rating scale/performance objectives	22	28.2	23	56.1
	78	100.0	41	100.0

Chi square = 7.74 with 1 degree of freedom.

Significance level = .005.

Table 7

Chi Square for Type of Instrument by School Systems Below and Above Median ADA

Type of Instrument	Below Median F	Below Median Pct	Above Median F	Above Median Pct
Rating scale	28	63.3	36	61.0
Combined rating scale/performance objectives	22	36.7	23	39.0
	60	100.0	59	100.0

Chi square = .005 with 1 degree of freedom.

Significance level = .94.

Content of Teacher Evaluation Instruments

Examination of the 124 teacher evaluation instruments which had content references revealed a wide range in the number of evaluation items listed on the instruments (Williams, pp. 67-68). The number of evaluation items on an instrument was determined by counting the number of response opportunities on the instrument. The briefest instruments in use in the state contained four evaluation items. The largest instrument in terms of number of evaluation items had 221 response opportunities. The mean number of evaluation items on instruments in use across the state was 30.

The content analysis coding sheet developed for use in this study listed 67 references to teacher characteristics, qualities, skills, and behaviors that were drawn from the literature (ERS, 1978; Holley & Hickman, 1981; Jenkins & Bausell, 1974; Kirk, 1978; Mitzel, 1960; Natriello et al, 1977; Queer, 1969; Quinn, Urich, & Aiken, 1975; Rosenshine & Furst, 1971; Vincent & Olson, 1972) and from the previously conducted pilot study of 18 Tennessee teacher evaluation instruments. These 67 references were grouped into four categories of (1) personal qualities, (2) professional qualities, (3) instructional skills, and (4) classroom mangement and discipline skills.

Table 8 presents the number of instruments on which each content reference appeared, the percentage of the total number of instruments on which each content reference appeared, and the category of each content reference. The content references are arranged from most frequently used to least frequently used evaluation criteria.

The most frequently cited evaluation criterion, appearing on 115 of the instruments, referred to cooperation with other school system personnel, a professional qualities item. Over 92% of the school systems evaluated teachers on this criterion.

Table 8

Number and Percentage of Appearance of Content References on School System Instruments

N = 124

Coding Sheet Item Number	Content Reference	Number	Percentage	Category
43	Cooperates in relationships with other teachers, administrators, and other school system personnel	115	92.7	Professional
68	Engages in effective long range and daily planning	113	91.1	Instructional
83	Establishes and maintains proper control of students	112	90.3	Classroom Management
38	Accepts and carries through his/her share of school and district responsibilities	108	87.1	Professional
58	Has adequate knowledge of subject matter	108	87.1	Instructional
26	Good attendance and punctuality	105	84.7	Personal
23	Good appearance--well groomed	105	84.7	Personal
24	Has developed good emotional stability	102	82.3	Personal
78	Makes appropriate use of a variety of material, media, books, displays, bulletin boards, resource persons, etc.	102	82.3	Instructional
60	Recognizes and provides for individual differences	99	79.8	Instructional
32	Exhibits enthusiasm	96	77.4	Personal
82	Has developed proper teacher-pupil relationships	93	75.0	Classroom Management
34	Maintains appropriate ethical and moral standards	91	73.4	Personal
31	Communicates effectively through proper use of grammar, speech, listening skills, vocabulary, non-verbal communication	90	72.6	Personal
42	Participates in positive and productive professional growth activities and organizations	90	72.6	Professional
44	Cooperates in and maintains appropriate relationships with parents	90	72.6	Professional

Table 8 (continued)

Coding Sheet Item Number	Content Reference	Number	Percentage	Category
63	Has skill in instruction	87	70.2	Instructional
47	Represents the school positively to the internal and external community	85	68.5	Professional
81	Provides a healthful and attractive environment (desk placement, ventilation, lighting, and proper size chairs and desks)	82	66.1	Classroom Management
67	Maintains effective and appropriate diagnosis and evaluation of and feedback to students	81	65.3	Instructional
33	Demonstrates responsiveness to the needs and feelings of others	80	64.5	Personal
30	Is friendly, courteous, tactful, patient	75	60.5	Personal
59	Inspires pupil effort	74	59.7	Instructional
28	Has sufficient energy and health	73	58.9	Personal
48	Adheres to established policies, rules, and procedures	71	57.3	Professional
71	Implements an appropriate variety of instructional activities and teaching methods	71	57.2	Instructional
29	Is fair, impartial, open-minded	66	53.2	Personal
40	Responds well to suggestions for performance improvement	66	53.2	Professional
64	Guides students into more effective and efficient development of skills, promotes student progress	65	52.4	Instructional
77	Demonstrates clarity in presentation, explanation, and instructions	65	52.4	Instructional
69	Has skill in securing student participation in academic activities	61	49.2	Instructional
86	Maintains accurate and appropriate records	61	49.2	Classroom Management

Table 8 (continued)

Coding Sheet Item Number	Content Reference	Number	Percentage	Category
49	Submits records accurately and promptly	56	45.2	Professional
70	Demonstrates knowledge of child development and understanding of students	55	44.4	Instructional
35	Demonstrates good judgment in decision making	53	42.7	Personal
36	Exhibits initiative and self-reliance	52	41.9	Personal
27	Has a good sense of humor	51	41.1	Personal
80	Practices good housekeeping habits (clean, neat, orderly)	50	40.3	Classroom Management
25	Has good voice control--well modulated	49	39.5	Personal
89	Maintains well-organized classroom routine	48	38.7	Classroom Management
62	Adjusts plans to meet changing needs and circumstances	46	37.1	Instructional
41	Has an interest in total school life (co- and extracurricular activities)	42	33.9	Professional
56	Maintains school property	42	33.9	Professional
52	Engages in self-evaluation of personal characteristics and instructional methods	40	32.3	Professional
50	Demonstrates loyalty to the school	36	29.0	Professional
54	Exhibits professional pride	35	28.2	Professional
87	Promotes self-discipline in students--students take responsibility for their own actions	33	26.6	Classroom Management
88	Instills mutual and self-respect among students	32	25.8	Classroom Management
46	Demonstrates discretion with confidential information	31	25.0	Professional
61	Encourages creative thinking and develops independent study habits	31	25.0	Instructional

Table 8 (continued)

Coding Sheet Item Number	Content Reference	Number	Percentage	Category
66	Makes appropriate use of praise/criticism	30	24.2	Instructional
84	Plans and implements activities appropriate to the physical attributes of the room	29	23.4	Classroom Management
45	Willingly shares ideas, techniques, and materials with colleagues	27	21.8	Professional
74	Makes appropriate homework assignments	26	21.0	Instructional
73	Involves students in planning, evaluation, and other non-instructional activities	25	20.2	Instructional
55	Adheres to adopted curriculum	21	16.9	Professional
76	Demonstrates skill in questioning	21	16.9	Instructional
72	Promotes positive student attitudes	20	16.1	Classroom Management
51	Observes proper channels in seeking change, providing input, or referring questions	19	15.3	Professional
53	Gives extra time and effort as needed to students and parents	19	15.3	Professional
90	Promotes development of values in students	19	15.3	Classroom Management
39	Participates in community life	15	12.1	Professional
65	Promotes development of good work habits	13	10.5	Instructional
92	Effectively utilizes administrative support	13	10.5	Classroom Management
91	Emphasizes health and safety	11	8.9	Classroom Management
85	Demonstrates consistent enforcement of rules	10	8.1	Classroom Management
75	Teaches concepts as well as factual information	6	4.8	Instructional

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The second most frequently cited evaluation item, listed on approximately 91% of the instruments, referred to effective planning, categorized as an instructional skill.

The third most frequently cited item, listed on over 90% of the instruments and categorized as a classroom management item, referred to establishing and maintaining proper control of students.

A total of 12 items appeared on at least 75% of the teacher evaluation instruments studied. Table 9 breaks them down by category. Of these most frequently used evaluation criteria, one third were personal qualities items and one third referred to instructional skills. The remaining third of the criteria referred to professional qualities and classroom management skills. Reference to Table 8 reveals that both of the professional qualities items that appeared on the list of the 12 most frequently used evaluation criteria referred to how well the teacher fits into the school system as a team worker. When these two items are combined with the personal qualities item that refers to teachers' attendance and punctuality, it can be seen that Tennessee school systems tended to emphasize desirability as a good employee on their teacher evaluation instruments.

The Mann-Whitney U test was applied to the 124 instruments that had content references to determine whether there were significant differences in content of instruments between school systems based on the six selected school system characteristics.

As summarized in Tables 10, 11, 13, and 15, no significant differences were found in the four categories of content references between school systems based upon participation in teacher contract negotiations, per pupil expenditure, method of selection of superintendent, or size of school system.

However, as indicated in Table 12, a significant difference was found between school systems below and above the median average annual teacher salary in the percentage of instructional skills references on their evaluation instruments. School systems above the median average annual teacher salary had a higher percentage of instructional skills references on their instruments. In addition, Table 14 reveals a significant difference between county and city/special school systems in the percentage of instructional skills references on their evaluation instruments. City/special school systems had a higher percentage of such references on their instruments.

Table 9

Number and Percentage of Items Appearing on 75% of Evaluation Instruments by Category

Category	Number of Items	Percentage
Personal qualities	4	33.3
Professional qualities	2	16.7
Instructional skills	4	33.3
Classroom management	2	16.7
	12	100.0

Table 10

Mann-Whitney U for Four Content Categories
by Negotiating and Non-Negotiating School Systems

School System Characteristic	Cases	MEAN RANK			
		Personal Qualities	Professional Qualities	Instructional Skills	Classroom Management Skills
Negotiating	57	66.8	57.6	65.8	58.9
Non-Negotiating	67	58.8	66.6	59.7	65.6
	124				
		U = 1662.5 Significance level = .22	U = 1631.5 Significance level = .16	U = 1723.5 Significance level = .35	U = 1705.0 Significance level = .31

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Table 11

Mann-Whitney U for Four Content Categories
by Per Pupil Expenditure

School System Characteristic	Cases	MEAN RANK			
		Personal Qualities	Professional Qualities	Instructional Skills	Classroom Management Skills
Below median expenditure	61	66.7	60.7	59.7	64.9
Above median expenditure	63	58.4	64.3	65.2	60.2
	124				
		U = 1660.0 Significance level = .20	U = 1811.5 Significance level = .58	U = 1749.0 Significance level = .39	U = 1774.5 Significance level = .46

Table 12

Mann-Whitney U for Four Content Categories
by Teacher Salary

School System Characteristic	Cases	MEAN RANK			
		Personal Qualities	Professional Qualities	Instructional Skills	Classroom Management Skills
Below median salary	62	65.0	65.3	56.0	68.6
Above median salary	62	59.9	59.7	69.0	56.4
	124				
		U = 1791.0 Significance level =.43	U = 1774.5 Significance level =.39	U = 1562.5 Significance level =.04	U = 1586.5 Significance level =.06

Table 13

Mann-Whitney U for Four Content Categories
by Method of Selection of Superintendent

School System Characteristic	Cases	MEAN RANK			
		Personal Qualities	Professional Qualities	Instructional Skills	Classroom Management Skills
Elected Superintendent	69	66.4	60.9	58.7	65.7
Appointed Superintendent	55	57.6	64.6	67.3	58.4
	124				
		U = 1628.0 Significance level =.18	U = 1784.5 Significance level = .57	U = 1633.0 Significance level = .18	U = 1674.0 Significance level = .26

Table 14

Mann-Whitney U for Four Content Categories
by Type of School System

School System Characteristic	Cases	MEAN RANK			
		Personal Qualities	Professional Qualities	Instructional Skills	Classroom Management Skills
County School System	82	65.4	65.5	56.4	65.2
City/Special School System	42	56.9	56.7	74.5	57.3
	124				
		U = 1485.0 Significance level = .21	U = 1477.0 Significance level = .20	U = 1219.0 Significance level = .008	U = 1501.5 Significance level = .24

Table 15

Mann-Whitney U for Four Content Categories
by Size of School System

School System Characteristic	Cases	MEAN RANK			
		Personal Qualities	Professional Qualities	Instructional Skills	Classroom Management Skills
Below median ADA	62	61.5	59.3	67.2	61.2
Above median ADA	62	63.5	65.7	57.8	63.8
	124				
		U = 1859.0 Significance level = .75	U = 1724.0 Significance level = .32	U = 1631.5 Significance level = .15	U = 1840.0 Significance level = .68

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be supported by the findings of this study:

1. Teacher salary and type of school system were school system characteristics that were related to both type and content of teacher evaluation instruments in use in Tennessee public school systems.

2. Of the four content categories on teacher evaluation instruments, only instructional skills references were related to school system characteristics.

3. There were significant differences between school systems with average annual teacher salary below and above the median in the type of instrument used. School systems below the median tended to use rating scales.

4. There were significant differences between school systems with average annual teacher salary below and above the median in the percentage of instructional skills references on their evaluation instruments. Those above the median had a higher percentage of instructional skills references on their instruments.

5. There were significant differences between county and city/special school systems in the type of instrument used. County school systems tended to use rating scales.

6. There were significant differences between county and city/special school systems in the percentage of instructional skills references on their evaluation instruments. City/special school systems had a higher percentage of instructional skills references on their evaluation instruments.

7. Tennessee school systems found some form of rating scale to be the most practical form of teacher evaluation instrument. Over 92% of the school systems studied used rating scales or a combination of rating scales and performance objectives.

8. Teacher evaluation instruments in use in Tennessee school systems tended to be composed of 30 evaluation items.

9. Approximately two thirds of the content references on teacher evaluation instruments in use in Tennessee school systems referred to teachers' personal qualities and instructional skills.

10. Tennessee school systems tended to emphasize the teacher's desirability as a good employee on their evaluation instruments. Three of the 12 evaluation criteria listed by at least 75% of the school systems studied referred to teachers' cooperation with school district personnel, their dependability in in carrying out school district responsibilities, and their punctuality and attendance.

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